

# The Bauddhatantis of Orissa:

Culture, Identity and Resurgence of an  
Ancient Guild of Buddhist Weavers



Sarita Dash



The Bauddhatantis of Orissa:  
*Culture, Identity and Resurgence of an  
Ancient Guild of Buddhist Weavers*



# The Bauddhatantis of Orissa:

Culture, Identity and Resurgence of an  
Ancient Guild of Buddhist Weavers



.

.

Sarita Dash

Society for Environmental Action and Restoration of  
Cultural Heritage, Birahakrushnapur, Puri District, Orissa.

The Bauddhatantis of Orissa:  
Culture, Identity and Resurgence  
of an Ancient Guild of Buddhist Weavers

© Sarita Dash, 2002

Publisher: P. Ragupathy  
on behalf of the Society for Environmental Action  
and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, Orissa

Design and layout: S. Anandamurugan

Typesetter & Printer:  
Sudarsan Graphics,  
27, Neelakanda Mehta Street,  
Chennai-600 017

Typography: Classical Garamond

Copies available with:  
Dr. Mangala Prasad Mohanty,  
Honorary Secretary,  
Society for Environmental Action and Restoration of  
Cultural Heritage, Batagaon, Birahakrushnapur - 752 002  
Puri District, Orissa.  
e-mail: search@hotmail.com

Price: Rupees 100.00

Cover Photograph : From the relief panels of Borobudur, Indonesia.

# Contents

|                                          |    |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| Publishers' Note                         | 6  |
| Foreword                                 | 7  |
| Acknowledgements                         | 9  |
| Chapter One      Introduction            | 11 |
| Chapter Two      Historical Profile      | 15 |
| Chapter Three    Profession and Economy  | 22 |
| Chapter Four    Society and Culture      | 27 |
| Chapter Five    Legends and Myths        | 36 |
| Chapter Six      Associated Communities  | 40 |
| Chapter Seven   Religion                 | 45 |
| Chapter Eight    Rediscovering the Faith | 52 |
| Chapter Nine    Conclusion               | 57 |
| Notes                                    | 62 |
| Bibliography                             | 66 |

## Publisher's Note

This publication is based on a research undertaken by Ms. Sarita Dash as a part of her Master's Degree Programme in the first batch of the Postgraduate Department of South Asian Studies of the Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar. It was the will power of Dr. Bimalendu Mohanty, the first Vice-Chancellor of the Utkal University of Culture and the vision of Dr. D.P. Pattanayak, Emeritus Professor of the University that made the unique experiment of a Culture University to take off. I thank for their encouragement towards this publication.

Dr. Mangala Prasad Mohanty, Coordinator, Postgraduate Department of Culture Studies of the Utkal University of Culture and Honorary Secretary of the Society for Environmental Action and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, Orissa, is bringing out this book through his organisation. Mr. Sumith Nakandala, the scholar-diplomat from Sri Lanka has contributed an appropriate foreword. The patient work of design and layout by Mr. S. Anandamurugan and the conscious typesetting cum printing by Mr. N. Subramanian of Sudarsan Graphics, Chennai, have made this publication a reality. I thank all of them.

23-11-2001  
Bhubaneswar

Dr. P. Ragupathy,  
Professor and Head of the  
Postgraduate Departments,  
Utkal University of Culture.

## Foreword

Freedom to choose one's way of life has become an essential criterion for Liberal Democracy today. In this context, the idea of cultural identity has acquired a wider significance, vying even with entities such as national and ethnic identities. Therefore, the word culture is understood and projected in an altogether different sense in recent times.

Sometimes back, when Dr. Bimalendu Mohanty, the first Vice-Chancellor of the Utkal University of Culture contacted me about the Buddhist Studies Department of the University, I was elated to find out that a unique experiment has been undertaken in establishing a University entirely devoted to explore the question of culture in all its contemporary connotations.

The world is witnessing an ever-increasing phenomenon of globalisation and integration of markets. The mere foundations of nation state has become a subject of intense debate in every discipline. The focus of the debate is neither economy nor politics but culture. The social fabric of India is an interesting laboratory. With all its age-old experiments, it is capable of enlightening the entire humanity on the mechanism of culture and cultural pluralism.

By bringing out the organic facts of an obscure community, the Baudhatantis of Orissa, to the intellectual limelight, Sarita Dash has aptly touched the sensitivity of the question of cultural identity. She should be congratulated in her attempts to understand the underpinnings of identity and thus contributing to the



current global debate. The work reflects the unique mandate of the Utkal University of Culture.

The most sacred Buddhist relic of Sri Lanka, the *Dantadathu* or the tooth relic of Buddha, had come to Sri Lanka from Orissa. This book itself reveals how Sri Lanka was connected to the awakening of Bauddhatantis in recent times. With all such long cultural links, I am happy to be associated in a humble way with this publication.

23-11-2001  
Chennai

Sumith Nakandala,  
Deputy High Commissioner,  
Deputy High Commission of  
Sri Lanka in Southern India

# Acknowledgments

The Buddhist weavers of Maniabandha fascinated me right from my childhood days. Hailing from a neighbouring village, Bindhanima, I have been witnessing the good-natured Buddhist weavers being treated with kindness and respect by the other communities. I always wondered what social and cultural factors made them so unique.

It was fulfilling when my studentship in the Utkal University of Culture, provided me with an opportunity to take up this topic of my obsession for study. Dr. P. Ragupathy, Professor of South Asian Studies and the Head of the Postgraduate Departments of the Utkal University of Culture, guided and supervised this research and its presentation. I thank him profusely.

I was privileged to have long conversations with Mr. Sadasiva Patra, the octogenarian preceptor of the Sarakas. He readily provided me with valuable information and material; published and unpublished. The Sarakas, Ranganis and the other communities associated with weaving, whom I was able to meet in Maniabandha, Nuapatna, Bindhanima and Balibisi, very kindly and enthusiastically provided me with information. I am indebted to all of them.

I thank the authorities of the State Archives, Bhubaneswar, State Museum Library, Bhubaneswar, and the library assistants of the Utkal University of Culture, for allowing me to use the libraries.

The moral support from the members of my family, the encouragement of my loving friends and the painstaking labour of the computer typesetters have made this dissertation a success. I am afraid that if I thank them, it would sound ~~merely~~ merely a formality.

Sarita Dash

## Chapter One

# Introduction

**K**alinga, the ancient name for today's Orissa, was also a synonym for textiles. Throughout South Asia, the word stood especially for loincloth in the early literary references<sup>1</sup>. Even foreign sources invariably point to the fact that the Orissa-Bengal region had a flourishing textile industry in the past<sup>2</sup>.

What features favoured the popularity of textile industry in this part of South Asia? Perhaps, the fertile Gangetic plains was suitable for cotton cultivation and based on that, there lived a number of communities associated with weaving. The availability of indigo plant, as a natural vegetation, contributed to the dyeing of the textiles.

Ancient Orissa had a great heritage of maritime trade in textiles. The port of Tamralipti, which was probably located at the mouth of the Ganges, where the present boundaries of Orissa and Bengal meet, was a grand emporium of trade. Besides, there were a number of enterpots along the coastline of Kalinga. These ports had trade with every part of the ancient world: from Greece and Rome in the West to China in the East. The main item of export was textile. Epigraphical evidences coming from several countries attest to this trade in textiles.

An interesting inscription dateable to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, coming from Cambodia, tells us how an Indian Prince, *Kaundinya Jayavarman*, introduced textiles to the

women of Cambodia<sup>3</sup>. The trade of *Kalingan* textiles, especially with South East Asian countries, continued for a long time.

Orissa was a region where Buddhism flourished right from the time of Buddha. It was here the *Vajrayana* sect of Buddhism that found much appeal in several foreign countries, had its origins. It is very well known that in ancient times the textile industry, maritime trade and Buddhism had close connections.

The ancient textile industry was carried out through the system of trade guilds. These trade guilds were autonomous bodies, which had their own system of self-governance. Various communities of different kinds of labour such as management, weaving, dyeing, root-digging, providing protection etc., were associated with the guilds.

A question arises that what happened to all those communities associated with the textile industry and trade. The pattern of the distribution of textile industry in Orissa, points to the presence of weaving communities along the Mahanadi basin, from its catchment area to the delta. Are they survivors of that flourishing textile tradition of Orissa?

Among these weaving communities there is a particular community who claim themselves Buddhists. They are known as *Bauddhatantis*. In Oriya, *tanta* means loom and *tanti* means weaver. Our attention was drawn to carry out a study of the community because of the close connections of Buddhism, trade and textile industry, in the past.

Today, the *Bauddhatantis* are found in many parts of Orissa. Athgarh, Nuapatna, Abhimanpur and Maniabandha of the District of Cuttack; Mohammadpur and Balibisi of the District of Jagatatsinghpur and Ragadi and Banki of the District of Khurda are the localities where the *Bauddhatantis* have their main enclaves of settlements. Maniabandha has been selected for the present study because of its association with a particular traditional style of textiles in Orissa. The discussions on the historical profile of the *Bauddhatantis* are presented in the second chapter.

Preliminary enquiries revealed to us that they are not aborigines of Orissa but had come from the Nandi village of the Vardhaman area of West Bengal. This impelled our curiosity further to probe into their origins and their process of naturalisation in Orissa.

During the course of our survey of existing literature and fieldwork, it has been felt by us that there is an urgent need to record the tradition, culture, craftsmanship and social organization of this community. No extensive attempt in this regard had been made earlier and there is always the possibility of evidence getting lost forever, if not recorded. We have attempted to record as much information as possible in the subsequent chapters.

A striking phenomenon that has been noticed in the course of this study is the resurgence of Buddhist identity among the *Bauddhataintis*. Both external and internal forces are operating in shaping this newly found enthusiasm for identity. This kindled our interest to focus the research to understand and analyse the resurgent

Buddhist identity of the weavers. The concluding chapters are devoted to this.

Religion is a topic of renewed interest in South Asia today. Escalation of religious fundamentalism and its close connections with power politics is a global phenomenon in the post cold war world and South Asia is no exception to this. The idea of ethnic identity is fastly getting replaced by cultural identity and religion has become the focus of this cultural identity, in many parts of the world. Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh equations playing an increasingly dominant role in the politics of ours, is an obvious phenomenon in India today. Many minor identities trying to match with the situation is the other side of this process. One example is the tribals claiming separate religious identities, differentiating them from the Hindu identity.

The *Bauddhatantis* are an ancient community whose original religious identity was almost forgotten and existed only for namesake. The resurgence of this identity in the last few decades, after being dormant for several centuries, is definitely worthy of investigation. This will help us to understand the question of identity in South Asia, today.

## Chapter Two

# Historical Profile

Any community that wishes to maintain an identity separated from others, nurtures some form of historiography. It may be written records, legends or myths. The *Bauddhatantis* of Maniabandha have their historiographical cum religious literature called *Buddha Padma Kalpatika*. We were told that there is a palm-leaf manuscript of this literature. Parts of it have been copied down in paper manuscript by Mr. Sadasiva Patra, a retired teacher of Maniabandha who belongs to this *Saraka* community. The language of this text seems to be a mixture of Sanskrit, Pali, Oriya and Bengali. A rough translation of excerpts from this manuscript, describing the *Saraka* community and their arrival to Orissa are produced here:

There were four *gotras* during those times, named *Krishna gotra*, *Adideva gotra*, *Nirakara gotra* and *Niralamba gotra*. 558 families stayed in their own country. Thirteen and a half families<sup>1</sup> came to Sri Orissa for the rising of knowledge and they propagated *Ahimsa dharma*. These are accepted to draw water from wells controlled by high caste people. There were 358 castes in *Jambu Dipa* sharing similar status with the *Bauddhatantis*.

In Sri Prataparudra's 28<sup>th</sup> regnal year (*Anka*), those *Bauddhaputras* came to this country. Before coming here, they first went to Ayodhya and Kashi. Prataparaja accepted them. Whichever country these *Bauddhaputras* have gone they have made that country prosperous.

*Bauddhatantis* making offerings to *Shri Vishnu* is also acceptable to the higher caste people. They do not take wine and fish. Nobody other than the *Parambrahmana* they worship. They are even wholly capable of reciting the *Gayatri mantra*. They are permitted to recite



any mantra including the *Gayatri mantra* but not the *Pranava*. They do not worship any god other than *Vishnu*. They do not take any food that is not purified by *Tulsi*.

Prataparudra asked the reason of their arrival. *Bauddhaputras* replied that they had come to have a debate on the *Vedas*. Raja asked them that on the basis of what text they wanted to compete. They replied that the debate would be on the basis of the *Nirvita Niralamba* text.

This literature fixes the date of arrival of *Bauddhatantis* to the 28<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Prataparudra Deva (1490-1538); i.e. 1518 A.D. The passages show ambiguity on their religious affinities, as they can be attributed to *Buddhism*, *Jainism* and *Vaisnavism*. Perhaps, it was written at a time when the *Bauddhatantis* accepted *Vaishnavism*.

A number of legends, myths and rituals that prevail among the *Bauddhatantis* today, also tell us about their history. Based on a book published by Mr. Sadasiva Patra<sup>2</sup> and based on our field study the following evidences are discussed hereby.

The people of this community call themselves as *Sarakas*. It has come from the word *shravaka*. In historical context, it stands for the identity of a Buddhist or Jaina householder. A particular legend which has been recorded in its complete form elsewhere in this research<sup>3</sup> tells us that the *sarakas* first came to Puri in the times of Prataprudra Deva. They have come from the Nandi village of Vardhaman. A debate was organised between them and the Brahmins in the royal court in which the Buddhists were defeated and sent out. Thereafter, they dispersed to remote and hilly parts of the country, seeking shelter. In this process, a few groups of them have come

to Choudwar which is near Cuttack and from there went to nearby places.

A variation of this legend tells us that the *sarakas*, when they were persecuted, first came to Balibisi which is situated on the delta region of the river Mahanadi in the district of Jagatsinghpur and then got dispersed further. Balibisi, even today, is an important centre for the *Sarakas*. Their settlement in the Mohammadpur village in Bilibisi area is called *Saraka Pantha*. The *sarakas* of Maniabandha also agree that they all have come from Balibisi. But, today, they tend to identify only those who recently have come from Balibisi as *Balibisia*.

The same legends which talk about persecution also talk about Prataparudra Raja patronizing the *sarakas*. It is said that when the *sarakas* visited him, he and his queen Lakshira Devi selected two among them as leaders and donned two sarees on their heads like turbans and made them *Mahapatras*. These sarees, even today, are called by them as *Prataparudra saree* and *Lakshira saree*. There are also two *thanas* (clans) in the community bearing the name of Prataparudra Deva and Lakshira Devi. The *Prataparudra thana* is the foremost among the existing four *thanas* (clans). Whenever a new *Mahapatra* is appointed, the *Prataparudra saree* is worn on his head. There are also rituals when the name of Prataparudra Deva is brought in. Whenever a marriage feast is organized, in the beginning and in the end, verses in the name of Prataparudra Deva are proclaimed.

The Puri temple records known as *Madala Panji*<sup>4</sup> also corroborate the legend heard from the *Sarakas* about the debate between the Buddhists and the Brahmins. But,

it talks about the event on two occasions; one in the times of Madana Mahadev alias Rajarajeswara II (1170-1194) and the other, during the reign of Prataparudra Deva (1490-1538). These records speak only about the Buddhist clergy and the *Sarakas* are not mentioned in them.

The *Chaitanya Bhagavata* of Iswar Das<sup>5</sup> narrates the persecution of Buddhist monks in the times of Anangabhima Deva and Madana Mahadeva. Perhaps, the confrontation between Buddhists and Brahmins was an ongoing process for several centuries and the *Sarakas* might have come during one such spurt of conflict during the times of Prataparudra Deva.

A few modern Historical writings also help us to trace the origins and history of the *Sarakas* in Orissa. We have already mentioned Sadasiva Patra. His book in Oriya, titled, *Buddhadeva and Bauddhadharma* was published in 1949<sup>6</sup>. The end part of this book gives us invaluable information on the history and culture of the *Sarakas*.

One of the early writings, *Sterling's Orissa*, published in 1904, refers to the legend about the arrival of the *Sarakas* to the court of Prataparudra Deva<sup>7</sup>. In 1911, Haraparasad Shastri wrote an introduction to the book, *Modern Buddhism and its followers*, authored by N. N. Vasu. In this introduction, Shastri records the following information:

A few years ago, Mr. Gait placed in my hands some materials from which it was found that the Saraki *tantis* who not only inhabit the Tributary Mahals of Cuttack, but are to be found in the settled districts of Cuttack and Puri, still worship Buddha along with the Brahminic Gods on all their religious ceremonies and that the word

*Saraki* is simply the Prakrit form of the word *Cravaka*. The *Sarakis* are to be found in Bankura and Burdwan areas. Although they bear a Buddhistic name, they seem to have forgotten all their Buddhism. The Cuttack Tributary Mahals were supposed to contain many relics of later Buddhism. The state of *Boud* named after Buddha was supposed to contain still a remnant of real Buddhist population<sup>8</sup>.

In 1923, *Prachina Shrivakoddharini Sabha*, a Jaina merchant association based in Calcutta, brought out a small publication, *Orissara Shrivaka (Saraka) Jatira Prachina Itihasa* (The ancient history of the Sarakas of Orissa) in Oriya, authored by *Jainadharma Bhusana Brahmachari* Shital Prasad. This publication claims that the *Sarakas* are of Jaina origins. No argument has been advanced for this claim except saying that 1908 Gazetteer of Puri District had enlisted the *Shravakas* as Jains<sup>9</sup>

W. W Hunter and Col. Dalton in their articles appeared in the book *What Historians Say About the Sarakas* published by the Jaina Dharma Prachara Samiti in 1938, traced the *Sarakas* to Jaina origins. But they have not recorded anything on the *Sarakas* of Cuttack District.<sup>10</sup>

Prof. Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee in 1940's advanced a theory that the *Sarakas* might have come to Orissa due to Mohamaddan persecution in Bengal.

*Sarakas' ancestors* lived in Nandigram in Vardhman district. They came to Puri perhaps as a result of Mohammadan persecution, in the reign of Prataparudra Deva. Thus the history of the *Sarakas* indicates an early migration of Buddhist monks from Bengal. Their surnames like Dutta, Vardhana, Chanda, Nandi etc., are unmistakably of Bengal origin .... They are now Oriyas in every respect.<sup>11</sup>

A 1988 publication, *Sahajiya Cult of Bengal and Pancha Sakha Cult*, written by Paritosh Das, discusses in detail the ways in which the Buddhists have become *Vaishnavites* in Bengal and in Orissa.<sup>12</sup> The historical and religious process described in this book is also applicable to the *Sarakas* which we shall discuss later.<sup>13</sup>

Summing up, all the evidences invariably point out that the *Sarakas* belong to an ancient guild of weavers and have come to Orissa from Nandi village of Vardhaman region of Bengal, during the reign of Prataparudra Deva, probably in 1518 A.D. Their arrival could be due to Mohammadan persecution or perhaps due to economic reasons. Prataparudra Deva's rule seemed to have promoted economic activities and maritime trade. It may be noted here, that the place Balibisi where they got settled in the initial stages, is also known for its Muslim settlements. It is very likely that this place in the Mahanadi delta was a centre of trade during those times. There is no doubt that Prataparudra Deva provided patronage to this community.

There is evidence that, even in subsequent times, they found royal patronage in the form of land donations to settle down in Orissa. However, it seems, the *Sarakas* were not completely cut off from their links with Vardhman until recent times. We were told, that the *Sarakas* of Maniabandha were paying taxes for their landed property in Vardhman until the beginnings of twentieth century.

Coming to the religious identity of the *Sarakas*, there are some differences of opinion. Their original religious affinities are traced to Jainism by some and to Buddhism

by others. Today, they appear to follow Vaishnavism but retain a Buddhist identity. There is contradicting information in their legends about Prataparudra Deva, patronizing them, and persecuting them. One possibility is that they were initially patronized by the king and later persecuted by him for religious reasons which made them to disperse to different parts of Orissa. The other possibility is that the *Sarakas* were not directly involved in the religious confrontations and they were always patronized for economic reasons. If they had been persecuted by Prataparudra Deva, why should they remember him with thanks even to this day? In that case, legends of persecution could only be a matter of their emotional identification with the persecuted monks. The socioreligious conditions of Orissa, especially with the advent of Chaitanya cult and their economic survival must have eventually led them to synthesize Buddhism with Vaishnavism.

## Chapter Three

# Profession and Economy

Weaving is the traditional and the only occupation of the *Sarakas*. The *Maniabandhi* textiles produced by them are of national and international repute. At present, the whole *Saraka* community depends on this profession. It is difficult to say whether the style of craft displayed by them had come from Vardhaman along with them. Because, the textiles produced in Vardhman today, are different from the *Maniabandhi* items. Perhaps, they had adopted a local style after coming to Orissa.

The equipments used in the process of weaving are *charkha*, drum, bobbin, lay or batten, treadles; shuttle (*manku*), comb, temple (*mandira*) and a horizontal loom of throw shuttle type. It is said that this type of loom is comparable to the looms of ancient Egypt<sup>1</sup>. The following items are used in making a loom.

- Wooden Hata (3 Bims): for *tani*, to roll the cloth, for the middle rolling,
- Wooden Frame (12 pieces): 4 pieces of 6', 4 pieces of 5' and 4 pieces of 3' each,
- One set of *Ba thread* for weaving double,
- One comb and one shuttle,
- Pipes nearly 50 in number,
- Bobbin nearly 100 in number
- One *charkha*.

The process begins with putting the threads in the bobbin from a charkha. The thread is then drummed by operating 100 bobbins at a time in the frame of the drum. A strand of 100 threads are produced in this way. It is called beaming. Dyeing the thread is through tie and dye method. This is a premeditated process. The design and patterns that are going to be produced in the textile should be kept in mind while dyeing. Chemical dyes are used nowadays. The dye is mixed with hot water in an earthen pot. The thread is immersed in the pot for a specific period of time. Then it is squeezed and dried in hot sun. The process is repeated with different colours to get the required effect. The thread is now ready for weaving.

The style of weaving is called *iqat*. This is a Javanese term. The equivalent traditional term in Orissa is *Bandha*. It is known as the most ingenious method used for patterning. The required pattern is produced by weaving the tie-dyed thread. Between the warp and the weft, if, only one is tie-dyed, then it is called single *iqat*. If both are tie-dyed then that is double *iqat*. The type of threads that are used generally are pure cotton, silk, merrise and tassar. Nowadays, they also add polyester to make the textiles cheaper and durable.

*Iqat* weaving prevails throughout Orissa. It is the pattern and design that differentiate the style. What is produced in Maniabandha has a specific identity and they are called as *Maniabandhi* or *Khandua*. The term *Khandua* is usually for silk items.

*Kumba* and conch shells are the most popular motifs of the said type of textiles. Flowers, leaves, buds, creepers,



lions, elephants, deer, peacocks, swans, fishes etc. are the other designs of decoration. Wheels and sculptures of the Konark temple are adopted as motifs in recent times. Cheaper textiles have big-sized motifs as they are less time-consuming.

The colours used in those textiles are mostly dark colours like red, green (banana leaf), yellow (*Jahniphulia*), violet, blue, black and maroon. Most of the sarees are multicoloured ones. The *Maniabandhi* textile is popular, mostly among the middle budget customers. At present, changes are noticed in the consumers' choice. The traditional *bandha* designs with flowers and animals are no more in high demand. People prefer a pattern called national border or plain border with simple dots and contrasting colours. Yet, they still prefer traditional designs in the headpiece. Today, the weavers adopt other styles like *Sambalpuri*, *Sonpuri* and *Bomkai* too. They immitate only the style, but the fabric remains the same. There is always an exchange of designs among the weavers. Maniabandha weavers get borders made by other weavers and weave on them, while, the *Maniabandhi* borders are sent to other places.

The *Maniabandhi* items of textiles are largely sarees, jodas (dhoti), lungis, shawls, bedsheets, shirtings, dress materials, curtains and handkerchiefs. The unique feature of this textile is its colour, polishing and brightness at a lower cost. As these are hand woven ones, each piece is always different from the other.

The *Maniabandhi* textile is popular among every Oriya family. Even today, an Oriya family prefers to go for this type of textiles on important occasions. It may be noted

here that a mention of *Maniabandhi silk saree* and *joda* can invariably be found in almost every literary work of Fakirmohan Senapati, the great Oriya writer of 19<sup>th</sup> century. In ancient days, high quality silk sarees known as *Bhuni*, *Brahmakari* etc., were produced in Maniabandha. The deterioration in quality today is said to be due to the lack of capital and proper assistance.

A significant event in the history of weavers in India is the advent of cooperative societies. The cooperative movement of weavers, which began in the 1930's, owes its origins to the National Movement. The crisis in the handloom industry after independence paved way for the national integration of the cooperative system of weavers. It was during this time the weavers' cooperative societies were organized in Orissa. Today, in Maniabandha and Nuapatna alone, there are about five cooperative societies. Some of them are government controlled and the others are organized privately. They all function through a democratic process of electing the office bearers.

Most of the weavers of our study are members of the local cooperative societies. The society provides them with cotton wool, dyes and sometimes the designs. They also place them with orders. Wages are provided by the societies on the basis of textiles produced. The average wage for a saree may range between 30 and 40 rupees. A small family can weave one cotton saree in a day. A silk saree may take four to five days and it may fetch wages between one hundred and one hundred and fifty rupees.

Poor weavers depend on the society for the supply of cotton wool, dye, etc. The society helps them by collecting

all what the weavers produce and by marketing them. The produce is marketed through the nationally integrated system of cooperative societies. Some affluent weavers don't depend on the cooperative societies for the supplies and they go for direct marketing. Some of the poor weavers too go for direct marketing by door to door sales. Because of the pilgrimage and tourism potentiality, Puri has become an important centre for marketing the textiles.

The supply of cotton mainly comes from Bargarh spinning mill (Sambalpur District) or from Malda (West Bengal). A local spinning mill at Nuapatna is not functioning at present.

A few of the *Bauddhatantis* today have gone for government employment and for cultivation. Yet, their main inclination is towards weaving. In their feeling, weaving is a profession that does not give much tension. It is a family venture in which every member of the family, including a small child, is involved. Handloom weaving is not a lucrative profession today. Still, these weavers are not prepared to give it up.

## Chapter Four

# Society and Culture

In a previous chapter, we have stated that the *Sarakas* are descendents of an ancient trade guild. Profession was the main criterion of identification for such guilds of the past. The members, belonging to such a guild, might have got dispersed and settled in far away places. Yet they shared a common identity, social organization and culture. An example from the past that demonstrates this phenomenon is the *Ayyayolai* trade guild of the early medieval times. Hailing from South India, they went and settled in several foreign countries. But, in their inscriptions they never failed to mention that they were all the children of the *Goddess Paramesvari* of *Ayyavolai*.<sup>1</sup>

Observations made on the *Bauddhatantis* of Orissa remind us of such great traditions of the ancient trade guilds of South Asia. All the *Saraka* villages in the Mahanadi basin have identical social organization and culture. Their settlements may be far away from each other, but they have the feeling and identity of oneness. The material for this chapter comes mainly from the *Saraka* village of Maniabandha. But our visits to the other *Saraka* villages made us to realize that institutions are identical among them.

The *Saraka* settlement is called a *Saraka Pantha*. The whole *Saraka* community is divided into four *thanas* or *badas* (clans). The following are the *thanas* :

- |                                 |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) <i>Pratapaparudra thana</i> | (3) <i>Chaudwar thana</i>   |
| (2) <i>Lakshira thana</i>       | (4) <i>Damodarpur thana</i> |

*Prataparudra thana* is the foremost among them. These four *thanas* have four totum sarees which bear the names of the *thanas* they stand for. The legends related to the nomenclature of the *thanas* and the sarees are recorded in a following chapter.

We were told, that 'at present, Maniabandha village is populated by only three of the four *thanas*. The *Chaudwar thana* has no members living in Maniabandha. Listed below is a rough estimation of the number of families under each *thana*:

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Prataparudra thana</i> | 72 families |
| <i>Lakshira thana</i>     | 60 families |
| <i>Damodarpur thana</i>   | 13 families |

The word used in this context for a unit of family is, *ghara*, etymologically meaning, 'household'.

When Sadasiva Patra wrote his book in 1949, he had listed the following twelve surnames found among the Sarakas:<sup>2</sup>

*Patra*  
*Chanda*  
*Dasa*  
*Paramanika*  
*Mahapatra*  
*Datta*  
*Vardhana*  
*Devta*  
*Kara*  
*Pala*  
*Behera*  
*Nandi*

However, in our recent interview with him, he has come out with a list in which two surnames are replaced with two new ones. Those surnames are *Dalei* and *Naha*.

*Sarakas* have a peaceful and harmonious society. Divorce, second marriage and other related problems are rarely found in them. Relationship with the other communities associated with weaving such as the Hindu weavers, the Buddhist *Ranganis*, the *Patra*, the *Koshakathia* etc.,<sup>3</sup> is cordial, but the *Sarakas* do not have marital relationship with any of them. They generally do not go for higher education. Only now, some among the younger generation have gone for intermediate and graduate level studies.

Every *thana* has a hierarchy of leadership. The order of the hierarchy is *Mahapatra*, *Paramanika*, *Pakha* and *Thanapati*<sup>4</sup> The commoners of the *Saraka* community are called the *Pancha*.<sup>5</sup> The *Mahapatra* with the help of the *Paramanika*, *Pakha*, *Thanapati* and the *Tahalias* (attendants or messengers) communicates with the *Pancha* or the members of the community. The jurisdiction of their administration is mainly on matters related to caste, conflicts among the members of the community and marriage. The annual meeting of the community takes place every year on the *Maghapanchami* day.<sup>6</sup> It is called *Shaliana*. The *Mahapatra* presides over every meeting.

The Office of the *Mahapatra* and *Paramanika* are hereditary. Only certain families are vested with this privilege. There are certain rules that should be followed in the selection of these posts of leadership. Only men can occupy these posts and the selected person should

be the most eligible one, coming from a family that is privileged to have those posts. The members of that family, for seven generations, should not have had more than one marriage or any illicit relationship.

The process of selection of these posts is called *Panabandha*. The selection should take place in the presence of all the *Pancha*. The general requirement is that the members of all four *thanas* should be present during this process. If this is not possible, then the members of the concerned *thana* and the above said leaders of all the *thanas* should be present.

During *panabandha*, these leaders sit in a circle. A saree is spread in the middle. Every member walks on that saree. The new leader sits on a new chair made for him and the saree, trod by everybody, is put on his head. The belief is that, with the blessings of these elderly leaders, he should proceed in his work.

Heredity, democracy and strict code of conduct seem to be the main principles that govern the organization of the *Saraka* society. In such a closed set up, no significant social mobility is observed. The hierarchy remains the same.

The traditional social organization was also an economic organization in the past. The advent of cooperative societies replacing the economic organization has been discussed in the previous chapter. Consequently, it seems, the traditional organization is left with powers, only in the areas of caste and culture. However, they have a newly found role to play with the resurgence of the question of religious identity. Nowadays, the Buddhist congregations

organized in every *Saraka* village are presided over by the traditional leadership.

Today, the rituals of the *Sarakas* may superficially appear to be belonging to the general cultural milieu of the Oriyas. But, a careful study of them would show that the *Sarakas* make effective use of some of their rituals and cultural institutions to protect and maintain a separate identity. Perhaps, the best example is the rituals associated with the institution of marriage.

*Sarakas* marry within their community and this is strictly observed. The procedure of marriage begins with the *Mahapatra* getting informed. The names and addresses of the bride and bridegroom are written in the *Jatiya Khata* (community record) under the orders of the *Mahapatra* and the *chitau* (notice) is prepared. The bride's family has to offer two *andas* (8 in number) of *khaja*, a sweet preparation made from flour, sugar and oil, to each family of their clan. Each family of their relatives should get four *andas* (16 in number) and the families of uncle, aunt and grandparents should get eight *andas* (32 in number) of *Khaja*. The process of informing about the marriage through the distribution of *khaja* is called *Dauda*.

In the morning of the day of the marriage, the *Mahapatra*, accompanied by the other three office bearers, would come to the bride's house to conduct the marriage ceremony. This part of the procedure is called *Ubhala*. Arecanuts are offered to receive them into the house. Then, the bride's father would declare the number of guests he could afford to invite. This declaration can be in any one of the following ways:



|                                        |                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Ubhala murtiye:</i>                 | inviting one member from each family.                                                                       |
| <i>Ubhala pate:</i>                    | Inviting only the male members from each family.                                                            |
| <i>Ubhala dipata:</i>                  | Inviting both male and female members from each family                                                      |
| <i>Ubhala charithakia /charibadia:</i> | Inviting all the members from the four <i>thanas</i>                                                        |
| <i>Ubhala pancha murtia:</i>           | Inviting only five people, including the <i>Mahapatra</i> (this happens when a bride's family is very poor) |

After this declaration, in the morning itself, any member of the community or the *tahalia* would go to invite the guests. Around midnoon, when the food is ready, once again the guests are invited. When the guests have assembled, an enquiry is made to ascertain whether every invitee has come and an attendance would be taken on this occasion. Whoever is present, has to say, *avadhan*; means, 'present'. If any one is missing, that person would be invited again. There after, guests are requested to be seated and water is served. The *Mahapatra* would now declare: '*Samasta Pancha jala ghenibaku avadhana hua*' (let everybody take water). When the food is served on leaf-plates, at the instance of the *Mahapatra* someone would say: '*Bahuta Ganga Prataparudra, Samasta pancha patra lagibaku agabhara hua*' (many Ganges Prataparudra [said], let every body take their food). After that, every body takes food. The *Mohapatra* declares the end of the feast. Then, the guests bless the couple and receive betel and arecanuts. This is called *Dalabanta*. Finally, the *Tahalia* would

declare: '*Bahut Ganga Prataparudra, Satara nala tale*'. (many Ganges Prataparudra, under seventeen canals), with which the guests retire.

There are some variations in the declarations. *Bahuta Ganga Prataparudra* is sometimes said as *Bahuta Ganga Prataparudra Kahile*; meaning, many Ganges Prataparudra said. Sometimes, *Bahuta Ganga Janardana*, replaces *Bahuta Ganga Prataparudra*.

The marriage feast at the bride's house is called *chairat karya*. This is purely vegetarian. If the bride's family is not affluent enough, mere rice, dal, and leaf curry would be enough for the feast. No demand can be made by any one on the quality of food. By the order of the *Mahapatra*, somebody from the community becomes the *karya* (master of ceremony) to conduct the *karya* (ceremony). He undertakes the responsibility of cooking. The women relatives of the bride's family help him in cooking. The condition for being appointed as a *karya* is that the person should not have gone for any second marriage and he should have married in a good family. The feast in the bridegroom's house is called *astamangala karya*<sup>7</sup>. The bridegroom has to be donned with the *Prataparudra* saree on his head, on the *astamangala* day.

Unlike in the case of the other Oriyas, the *Saraka* bride need not to go to the bridegroom's house immediately. Her family can keep her for a longer time, which is unspecified. The marriage is consummated when the bride goes to her husband's household. The first-night ceremony is fixed on any day, after three days of her arrival. The brother of the bride is honoured on this day by placing a *Prataparudra* saree on his head.

*Sarakas* marry at an early age. Girls are married normally between sixteen to eighteen and men marry usually between eighteen to twenty two. No dowry system is prevalent in *Saraka* marriages. In the past, there were mass marriages. This is not practiced nowadays. The old practice was to conduct marriages only during day times. At present, night weddings are not uncommon.

The *Sarakas* officiate all their rituals and ceremonies by themselves. They do not require the services of Brahmin priests. Any *Saraka* who officiates ceremonies in the Buddhist way is called, *Bauddha Karmania*. The *mantras* he recites on those occasions are in a way similar to Hindu *mantras*, addressed to *Vishnu* and other Hindu deities. But, what is interesting is that Buddha is included as one of the deities addressed to, and the language of the *mantras* is a mixture of Sanskrit, Pali, Bengali and Oriya. However, there are two occasions when they need the services of Brahmin priests; one is to perform a *homa* on the occasion of the fourth night (first union of the couple) and the other is on the eleventh day ceremony after death.

The main festival of the *Sarakas* is the *Buddha purnima* <sup>8</sup>. The major Hindu fasting days for them are the four *Bada Ekadasis* and the *Shiva chaturdasi*<sup>9</sup>.

The festival days are *Kartika purnami*<sup>10</sup> and *Magha saptami*<sup>11</sup>. An interesting ritual is observed on the *Kartika Purnami* day by the *Nuasarakas*. They are the recent arrivals to Maniabandha from Saraka Patna of Dhenkanal district. On the *Kartika Purnami* day, they draw a picture of a ship on the floor and place a chair on that. Then, one by one, the children of the house are

put on this chair. Vermilion and sandal paste are applied on their forehead and food is given to them while seated on the chair. This ritual, perhaps, could be traced to the maritime activities of the Buddhist weavers.

On *Maghasaptami* day, the *Sarakas* go to river Chandrabhaga at Konark to have a holy dip. The author Shital Prasad, in the book; *Orissa Saraka Jatira Prachina Atmakatha*, records that the *Sarakas* of Orissa visit Khandagiri and Udayagiri on the *Magha saptami* day. However, our enquiries with the *Sarakas* of Maniabandha today, didn't confirm this information <sup>12</sup>:

## Chapter Five

# Legends and Myths

Myths and legends are an important source to study the identity of a society. They, not only have a bearing to the history of the community, but also reveal their inner aspirations and binary oppositions that motivate them. We have already discussed some of the legends in chapter two. In this chapter, those myths and legends are recorded in their full form as told by the *Sarakas*.

During the reign of Prataparudra Deva, some Buddhist monks who were ancestors of the *Sarakas* have come from the Nandi Village of Vardhaman in Bengal to Puri to have a *Darshan* of Lord Jagannath. They stayed in Puri for sometime. During their stay, the Brahmins of Puri became envy of them and tried to evict them from Puri. One day, the king wanted to know who were superior; the Brahmins or the Buddhist monks. A contest was arranged. The queen Lakshira Devi supported the Buddhist monks. They, based on their religious texts, challenged the Vedas. A pot, having a snake inside, was brought to the contesting parties. Both the Brahmins and the Buddhist monks were asked to find out through their perceiving powers, what was inside the pot. The Buddhist monks correctly diagnosed that it was a snake. But, the Brahmins, through their magical power, burnt the snake into ashes and said that there were ashes inside the pot. Thus, the Buddhist monks were disproved. The king declared the defeat of the Buddhist monks and ordered for their heads to be severed. Some got killed and others ran away to the forests and hilly terrains belonging to the vassal chiefs. Some of them went to Chaudwar and from there they got dispersed to places like Balibisi, Maniabandha, Dhenkanal, Banki etc. They had to live incognito among the lower caste people and cultivators. In the process, they had to adopt other ways of life and they lost touch with one another. Some of them lost their identity completely. For a long time they did not care to know the whereabouts of their brethren. Only much later, when

there was a feeling of safety, they mobilised themselves to re-establish their identity.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1904 edition of Sterling's Orissa, the story is recorded in the following way :

It is said that a serious robbery took place in the Raja's palace and that he (Prataparudra Deva) being anxious to discover the perpetrators, assembled together all the wise men, both of the Buddhist and Brahmanical persecution, to obtain their assistance in prosecuting an investigation. The Bramins could tell nothing, but the followers of Buddha, through their knowledge of the occult art were enabled to point out both the offender and the place where the stolen property was concealed. The Raja was induced by this incident to form so high an opinion of the learning and skill of the Buddhists that he became for sometime a warm supporter of that sect. His Rani, on the other hand espoused zealously the cause of the Brahmins. It was at last determined to make another formal trial of their relative skill as men of science and magicians. Accordingly a snake was secretly put into an earthen jar, the mouth of which being covered up, the vessel was produced in a great assembly at the palace. Both parties were then asked what the jar contained. The Brahmins answered-it contained only earth and sure enough, when opened it was found to contain nothing but earth. This specimen of skill entirely changed the Raja's opinions, but he now became as violent as he had before prejudiced in their favour-so much so that he not only withdrew his protection and countenance, but violently expelled the whole sect from his dominion and destroyed all their books. It is added that about this time Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came from Naida in Bengal to visit the temple of Jagannath and that he performed miracles before the Raja.<sup>2</sup>

Madalapanji chronicles<sup>3</sup>, maintained by the Puri temple, talks about the contest between the Brahmins and the Buddhists on two occasions. It assigns the event to the reign of Madana Mahadeva *alias* Rajrajeswara-II (1170-1194) and again to the reign of Prataparudra Deva. The same story is repeated in both the occasions.

The following story from the *Sarakas* of Maniabandha talks about the origins of their clans.

During the reign of Prataparudra Deva, some Buddhist *Sarakas* came to Puri from the Nāndi village of Vardhaman. Though the king himself was a Vaishnavite, yet, he did not do any harm to the Buddhists. He organised a discussion between the Buddhists and the Brahmins in the Muktimandap of Puri temple. Being pleased with their knowledge, he made somebody among them the *Mahapatra* (leader of the clan) and tied a saree as a turban on his head. In gratitude of the gesture from the king, the *Sarakas* named the type of that saree as Prataparudra saree and the clan as Prataparudra clan. By this time, there were a number of *Sarakas* in the Damodarpur village near Puri. During the *Gundicha Yatra* (Car Festival) of Lord Jagannath they met the king and narrated him the history of the car festival of Puri. Their narration was logical and acceptable. The queen Lakshira Devi who was accompanying the king at that time was very much pleased to hear this narration. So, she appointed two more *Mahapatras* by presenting them with two sarees. These two sarees and the associated clans of *Mahapatras* were named after Queen Lakshira and the village Damodarpur. A group of *Sarakas* living in Chaudwar also created an office of *Mahapatra* for their clan and this came to be known as Chaudwar clan, associated with the Chaudwar saree.<sup>4</sup>.

Another legend we record below, talks about the patronage given to them. A sense of pride and independence of this artisan community is reflected in this legend.

Some *Sarakas* from Balibisi were going to Maniabandha to attend to a marriage. On their way, they took rest by the side of a pond in Athagarh. By that time, the ruler of that locality happened to pass through that way. The *Sarakas* chose not to pay him any respect, thinking why should they pay obeisance to a ruler of another place. The ruler became angry and asked his men to bring the *Sarakas* to him. He enquired about their identity and the bundles they were carrying with them. The *Sarakas* were carrying some sarees produced by them in the bundles. The ruler was very much pleased with the

quality of the sarees. He requested them to stay in his territory and promised to offer them lands to settle down. The *Sarakas* said that they would consider the offer and would tell him when they return from Maniabandha. On their way back, they decided to stay in Athagarh. Their descendents still live in the village Rāsarasikapur in Athagarh.<sup>5</sup>



## Chapter Six

# Associated Communities

It is a well-known fact, that the agrarian communities of India used to have their own dependent service castes associated with them. The artisan merchants too, had their dependent associated castes, even though not as elaborate as the agrarian communities. Dyers and root-diggers were the most important service castes associated with the weaver-merchants. They were all part of the guild system of the past<sup>1</sup>. Today, in Orissa, wherever the *Sarakas* live, one may find a few families of the dyers too, living in the nearby localities. In the caste hierarchy, one who provides the livelihood is always higher than the one who receives it. The dyers and root-diggers are below the rank of the weavers. The root-diggers are the lowest in the rank.

The dyers of Orissa are called *Ranganis*. *Ranga*, means dye. Like the *Sarakas*, the *Ranganis* are also a peaceful community, found settled in different parts of Orissa. Sometimes, they are found in places where the *Sarakas* are not living. They too, claim Buddhist origins for them.

A considerable number of *Ranganis* live in Maniabandha and Nuapatna. The people of this community say that their ancestors were dying textiles with colours made from roots and barks of plants such as *Achhu*, *Pichhuli*, *Kanjipani*, etc. These colours were mainly red and blue and according to their claim, were fast colours. With the advent of chemical dyes, the *Ranganis* lost their original profession and took to weaving.

The *Ranganis* have surnames such as *Senapati*, *Patra*, *Behera* and *Dasa*. Within the community there is no hierarchy. The main concentration of the community is found in Narasinghpur, Baramba, Banki, Bindhanima, Kankarajodi, Athagarh, Balibisi, Manijanga and Berhampur areas of Orissa.

There are three clans among them: *Ainshia*, *Niramishasi* and *Hansi* (vegetarian, non-vegetarian and she-swan?). The non-vegetarian clan lives in the Ganjam district of Orissa. The *Ranganis* in Cuttack District are mainly vegetarians. They normally do not take even garlic and onions. The people we interviewed, were unable to say anything on the *Hansi* clan. They marry only within their clan. Perhaps, the food habit prevents inter-marriage. The vegetarian *Ranganis* identify their brethren through an ingenious use of secret code words. As they live in different, far away parts of the state, it is important for them to identify their clan members and to avoid impersonations on occasions such as marriage proposals. In case of doubt, a vegetarian *Rangani* would ask the other to come out with the symbols. The symbols are the following secret code words which should be said one by one.

*Shrimatama*  
*Chaudapari*  
*Dashapentha*  
*Panchapari*  
*Athagarh*  
*Kanduda*

There is no specific meaning to these code words. A rough translation may go as follows:

*Shrimatama* (?)

*Chaudapari* (14 on the other side of the river)

*Dashapentha* (10 centres)

*Panchapari* (5 on the other side of the river)

*Āthagarh* (8 Capitals)

*Kanduda* (?)

Traditionally, the *Ranganis* have four centres in Orissa. These are:

*Naikula tinishaha ghara* (Riverside 300 houses)

*Nayagarh side* 350 houses (Pata paita)

*Sakhigopal*

*Paramahansa* (Jajpur)

All *Ranganis* of Orissa have an annual meet in the month of February or March. Village level meet takes place every month. All matters related to their caste, are discussed during these meets. Like the *Sarakas*, the *Ranganis* also, have their traditional office bearers such as *Senapati*, *Patra*, *Bhalabhai* etc. *Senapati* presides over the meetings.

Today, the Buddhist origins are only a memory to the *Ranganis*. Now, for generations, they have become followers of the Shri Chaitanya sect of Vaishnavism. They read Bhagabata everyday; worship Tulasi; adorn their forehead with a long Tilak; wear Tulasi mali and visit Puri for the Darshan of Lord Jagannath. They also make pilgrimages to Nadia in West Bengal, the birthplace of Shri Chaitanya.

Even though both the *Ranganis* and the *Sarakas* claim Buddhist origins, there are no social interactions between them. Unlike the *Sarakas*, the *Ranganis* do not talk about

migration from outside of Orissa. Compared to the *Sarakas*, *Ranganis* are less enthusiastic in reviving their Buddhist identity.

This may be due to the fact that in the past, the *Ranganis* were the service community in the guild of the *Saraka* artisan merchants. In present times, the *Ranganis* got alienated from the *Sarakas*, because the *Sarakas* were not prepared to give them equal status, under a common Buddhist identity. While the upper echelon was highly conscious about the Buddhist identity, the lower level was prepared to get absorbed into Vaishnavism. However, today, some of the *Ranganis* are attracted towards their old Buddhist identity, may be, because of the prestige involved in that and also due to the accomodative spirit of the *Sarakas*. This spirit, on the part of the *Sarakas*, is due to their need to strengthen their Buddhist identity.

In the official census, the *Ranganis* are classified as Hindus. There is also a proposal from the government to consider the *Ranganis* as a scheduled caste, but they seem to be not very enthusiastic about that either.

The community of root-diggers has completely lost its identity. No trace of them could be found in the region of our study. Probably, they might have turned to other professions such as agricultural labour. Some of them could have even got absorbed into the scheduled caste weaving communities.

Another community of weavers, that evokes some interest related to this study, is the community of *Pataras*. They are very few in number and found in places like

Nuapatna, Balibisi etc. Their surnames go as *Tosha*, *Pala*, *Kundu* and *Dasa*. We have heard some of them too claiming Buddhist origins.

The *Koshakathia* is a community that was involved in the culture of cocoons and making silk thread. Today, they also have become weavers. They are specialised in weaving shawls from Tassar. Their surnames are *Guin*, *Pala*, *Katuala* and *Bhanja*. A few families of them live in Maniabandha and Nuapatna.

The other communities of Orissa with whom the *Sarakas* share their profession are:

The Oriya weavers

The Gaudiya weavers

The Bengali weavers

The Telugu weavers

## Chapter Seven

# Religion

A historical background of the Buddhist origins of the *Bauddhatantis* and the circumstances in which they have accepted Hinduism have been discussed in chapter two and in chapter five. What religion do they practice today? What do they think about what they practice? How have they compromised and synthesized Buddhism and Hinduism? What elements of Buddhism are surviving in them? In this chapter, we attempt to probe into these questions and record whatever that has been observed.

The *Sarakas* claim themselves as Mahayana Buddhists. Eventhough, Orissa-Bengal region was famous for esoteric Buddhist cults such as Vajrayana, Mantrayana, Tantrayana, Sahajayana etc.,<sup>1</sup> no traces of them are found in the religion of the *Sarakas*; either in practice or in memory. The three strains of religions that have shaped their present ideology are Buddhism, mainstream Hinduism and the Shri Chaitanya cult of devotional Vaishnavism. The religion they practice today, is a unique synthesis of the above strains. Coming from a prestigious artisan merchant community, the *Sarakas* could not ordinarily be influenced by the process of Sanskritisation. Therefore, instead of immitating Brahmanical ways, they created a unique and parallel institution of a religion of their own. This is evident from a religious text called *Sishu veda* that defines their idea of religion today.

*Sishu Veda* means the child veda. This is neither Brahmanical nor entirely Buddhist. It is a humble but a

parallel one to the four *vedas* of the mainstream Hinduism and the vast canons of Buddhism. The Sishu veda is not available in printed form. Perhaps, there could be manuscripts but we have not seen any. We have only heard it being recited in the rituals of the Sarakas. Hereby, we record excerpts of some stanzas from *Sishu veda*<sup>2</sup>.

*Namo Buddha mahamuni Jnyana ratna prakasitam  
Bauddhapunya kathamjata? Bauddhaputra shravakai  
statha unmla maya de baude mukti sada Buddhei.*

*Jivatma paramatmancha mayan ekancha bhasitam.  
Atmancha kebala brahma sarvatra paripurakam.*

*Ahimsa paramadharma vairabaddha bibarjita. Nilachala  
nivashaya Bouddharupi namonamah. Namaste  
Bauddha devayam anantam Shirabhusanam Yogamaya  
Subhadrancha madhye Shri vijaye tatha. Jagannatha guru  
Buddhancha dharmachakra sudarshanam. Om-kara  
Brahma murteencha chaturmurtee sthitam Bhajeta.*

*Jebe dehisanka nasti, jnyana margesu kalpitana mukhena  
bhasitam mithya, satyena pratipalita. Je deshe gamana  
Bauddhe tatdeshe jnyana uditana, himsadharmas vināsaya  
jivanmukti pradarshayet. Padmalava Narendrasya  
Bauddhadeva susevitana, tasya ajnya prakasayet kathitam  
Sishusuvedakam.*

*Chakei vingara name Bauddha vivikara shurabanta  
Bauddharupe avatara, Hansatarangena Bauddha, Bahe  
patala chanchala varna kariyam sthiti, bahuta mante  
Bauddha Vaishakhe janti, bolanti Padmalava batrisha  
Bauddhake amar parinama.*

*Vandeham Bhagavan Buddham, Lokeswara Buddham,  
Devadasa vichari chaucharane anumate payam nirmala  
chitte dhyayee, Indra aile Airavata chadhiyan,  
Dugdhabhande ruddha sakala parvata chaham siddhe yadi  
sharavaka siddha purna-marana nadekhu nayane, mithya  
na kahum ajnyane, Ahimsa sarva samhita, matanti  
Bauddhe amar jati, Bolanti Padmalava batrisha  
Bauddhake amar parinama.*

*Jiye bindu Vidyadevi, atha chari, chau charane, Satara  
dharma, baisha parama, Batrisha Bauddha, Tetrisha  
janata, Padmasane Abahanam tatha.*

The language of these stanzas seems to be a mixture of Sanskrit, Pali, Bengali and Oriya. The stanzas, in certain instances, are also abstract in their meaning. A rough translation we attempted, go as follows:

Prayer to the Buddha Mahamuni to evoke the gem of enlightenment. How do the Buddha dharma, also the children of Buddha, the *Shravakas* have originated?

Oh Lord Buddha, you give me *mukti* forever. I say *jivatma* and *paramatma* are one and the same. *Atma* is *Brahman* which is omnipresent.

*Ahimsa* is the greatest *dharma*. Killing enemies should always be prohibited. Prayer to the Lord in the form of Buddha, who lives in *Nilachala* (Puri). Prayer to *Buddhadeva* (*Jagannatha*), *Ananta shira bhusanam* (*Balabhadra*) and to *Yogamaya Subhadra* who is in the middle. *Jagannatha* is the guru, *Dharmachakra* (the wheel of Dharma) is *Sudarshana* (the disc of Vishnu).



Prayer to Omkara, the *Brahmamurtee* and to the *Chaturmurtees* who are installed (in Puri).

When there is no fear about the body (there is) the way to think through *Jñyana* (enlightenment). Face tells lies, truth prevails. Wherever the Buddhists have gone (they have gone) to evoke enlightenment, to destroy violence and to perceive *Jivan mukti* (Salvation while one is alive).

*Padmalabha Narendra* worships Buddha and obeys his order. Thus says *Sishu Veda*.

Buddha as *chakei vingara*, Buddha as one who can take different forms, Buddha as valarous, Buddha as an *avatara*, Buddha as a swan on waves, Buddha as one who can change colours fastly.

You are present, performing these feats (Reference to Dhyani Buddhas?) It is said Buddha was born in *Baishakha*. Thus says *Padmalava*. Our Prayers are to thirty two Buddhas.

Prayer to Lord Buddha, Lokesvara Buddha, considered, a devotee of Devas. Pray to the feet of Four (in Puri) with a pure mind. Indra came in Airavata. All the mountains are enclosed in the milk-pot. *Siddhas* want the *Shravaka siddhas* not to see complete death through their eyes, not to say lies even unconsciously. Non-violence is the sum total of everything. (This was) said to the Buddhists of our creed. Thus says *Padmalava*. Our prayers to thirty two Buddhas.

Long live *Bindu Vidyadevi* (Goddess of learning). These four (stanzas) to the feet of Four (in Puri), seventeen

religions, twenty two great ones, thirty two Buddhas, thirty three peoples, ascended thus on the Lotus seat.

The author of this *Sishu Veda* is not known to us. The stanzas repeat a phrase, 'thus says *Paḍmalava*'. There is a possibility that *Padmalava* could be the author of *Sishu Veda*. The other possibility is that '*Padmalava*' stands for *Padmapani* or *Bodddhisatva Avalokitesvara* of Mahayana Buddhism.

The stanzas provide an insight into the ideology of the religion of the *Sarakas*. The *Sishu veda* talks about *Buddha*, *Lokesvara* (*Bodddhisatva*), the *Dhyani Buddhas*, the thirty two *Buddhas*, the *Dharmachakra*, the four deities of Puri (*Jagannath*, *Balabhadra*, *Subhadra* and *Sudarshana*), *Siddhas* and *Sharavaka Siddhas*. It categorically equates *Buddha* with *Jagannatha* and *Dharmachakra* with *Sudarshana*. What is the nature of this synthesisation? A close observation of the above stanzas of *Sishu Veda* would clearly reveal that Buddhism is its substratum and the *Jagannatha* cult or *Vaishnavism* is only a superimposed one.

Parts of the *Sishu Veda* show the semblance of Advaita philosophy and Bhagavat Geeta. Note the following verses of *Sishu Veda*:

Through me it is said that *Jivatma* and *Paramatma* are one and the same. *Atma* is *Brahman* which is omnipresent. ....When there is no fear about the body (there is) the way to think through *Jryana*. Face tells lies, truth prevails. Wherever the Buddhists have gone (they have gone) to evoke enlightenment, to destroy violence and to perceive *Jivanmukti* (Salvation while one is alive).

A perusal of these verses would show that the *Sishu Veda* has absorbed only the ideas that are acceptable to

Buddhism. Considering *Jivatma* and *Paramatma* as one, is *Nirishvaravada* and that suits Buddhism. The *Sishu Veda* talks only about *Jivanmukti* thus avoiding the idea of heaven. It talks on *Ahimsa dharma* and stresses that it is exclusive (non-violence is the sum total of everything). It also proudly proclaims that spiritual achievements are evoked only by the children of Buddha, wherever they go. The impression one gets is that, in ideology and identity, the *Sarakas* never really have lost their religion. The superimposition of *Jagannath* cult perhaps, is a clever concealment.

The synthesis of *Vishnu* or *Krishna* or *Jagannath* with *Buddha* in Orissa, goes back to the times of the construction of Jagannath Temple. *Dasavatara* sculptures of this time, show Buddha as the *Ninth Avatara* in place of Krishna or Jagannath. There is a belief, that a tooth relic of Buddha is kept inside the naval part of the *Jagannatha* image of the Puri temple. Every twelfth year, when a new wooden image is made, the relic is transferred to the new one. Symbolically, it is this relic that gives the power to the image. If this belief has any historical truth, then there is no wonder that right from the inception of the *Jagannath* cult, the Buddhists considered *Jagannath* as *Buddha*.<sup>3</sup>

Jayadeva's 'Gitagovindam', perhaps written in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. A.D., provides the literary attestation for the synthesis of Buddha as the *Ninth Avatara*:

*Moved by deep compassion, you condemn the  
Vedic-way.*

*That ordains animal slaughter in rites of sacrifice.*

*You take form as the enlightened Buddha, Krishna.  
Triumph, Hari, Lord of the world<sup>4</sup>.*

In Vaishnava Bhakti tradition, as *Krishna* himself is the Lord, there was no way of portraying him as an *avatara*. Therefore, that place was given to *Buddha*. The difference between the Hindus and the *Sarakas* about this synthesis is that the Hindus consider *Buddha* as an *avatara* of *Krishna* or *Jagannath*, but the *Sishu Veda* of the *Sarakas* says that *Buddha* has become *Jagannath*. This subtle difference in perception was conformed when we interviewed some of the *Sarakas*. When asked about their faith in *Jagannath*, the reply came promptly; 'Who is *Jagannath*? He is our *Buddha*'.

The *Sarakas* do not invite any Brahmin priest to officiate their rituals. During all occasions the *Sishu Veda* and some other slokas of their own are recited by anyone who knows that. There are no restrictions about who can recite them. The people who recite the *mantras* or officiate the rituals are not paid with any remuneration.

Adhering themselves to the ideas of *Sishu Veda*, the *Sarakas* have a firm belief in *ahimsa dharma*. They are complete vegetarians; no alcoholism; normally soft spoken and violence is not heard of. The other communities look at them with sympathy and respect. The *ahimsa dharma* is embedded in their culture to an extent that even while cutting vegetables, one should not utter the word, 'cut'. If anybody says such a word, the whole vegetables should be thrown away. The unique ways in which the *Sarakas* practice their religion are discussed in the chapter on 'Society and Culture'.

## Chapter Eight

### Re-discovering the Faith

This chapter deals with an interesting process that is immensely influencing the *Sarakas* during the present times. This is the re-discovery and renewal of their Buddhist faith.

During colonial times, the bulk of the Buddhist canon got translated into English, German and other European languages. Buddhism was making a tremendous appeal to the intellectuals of the modern West. Religious awakening, in other Buddhist countries such as Sri Lanka, Burma, Japan etc., made them interested in caring for the survival of Buddhism in India. By now, Buddhism was no more a threat to Hinduism. The national movement in India and the nationalist leaders started taking pride in the Buddhist heritage of India. Since 1930's, people like Dr. Ambedkar were thinking of re-introducing Buddhism to the downtrodden masses.

All the said developments made an impact on a few educated people among the *Bauddhatantis*. In 1949, Sadasiva Patra who was a school teacher in History, wrote a book on Buddhism and the *Sarakas* in Oriya.<sup>1</sup> In those days, he was associated with the renowned Oriya literateur Mayadhar Mansingh and was inspired by him to write this book on his community. He was also blessed by Amara Parama Muni, the Buddhist ascetic of Chaudwar, in this venture.<sup>2</sup> This small publication not only made an impact on the *Sarakas*, but also created an awareness among the other educated Oriyas about the presence of such a community among them.

In 1956, Pt. Nilakantha Dash, P. K. Mukherjee, the eminent professor of History of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and others, organised a meeting at Nuapatna and planted a *Bodhi tree*<sup>3</sup> there. In the following year, the *Brahmadesha* Buddhist council from Myanmar visited this place and donated one bronze image of Buddha and funds.<sup>4</sup> Since then, the image house and the *Bodhi tree* have become the centre of worship for the *Saraka* community. It should be noted here, that until this development, they never had a Buddhist place of worship for them.

Mention should be made in this context on the Mahabodhi Society of India. This Society was founded in Calcutta by Anagarika Dharmapala, who was a Buddhist reformer from Sri Lanka. He spear-headed a prolonged struggle with Brahmins and British authorities to restore the Buddhist sacred places to Buddhists. Subsequently, in the 1930's, the Buddhist temples in places such as Buddhagaya, Sanchi, Sarnath, etc., came under the control of the Mahabodhi Society. The Society was making a big impact in the awakening of Buddhism in India.<sup>5</sup> In 1949, S. Patra wrote:

Recently, a religious revolution is seen among the Buddhists. They have tried to know their own self. The *Sarakas* are prepared to build their life according to the pious words of Buddha. Behind them, is the Mahabodhi society of Calcutta. This institution is ready to eradicate the problems of the Buddhists of Orissa and it has directed them to progress with times. There is a proposal to build a Buddhist temple at Bhubaneswar in Orissa with the assistance of the Mahabodhi society. If that happens, like a light house in sea-front, the Mahabodhi society will be directing the *Sarakas* to the *Dharmarajya*<sup>6</sup>.

When the Bhubaneswar city was planned, Nehru took a special interest in allotting land to the Mahabodhi Society

and to build a Buddhist temple there. This establishment too, provides a moral support to the welfare and Buddhist identity of the *Sarakas*. Below, we quote Ven. Chandraratna Thero, the present incumbent of the Mahabodhi Society in Bhubaneswar.

But where are the real Buddhists in the State ? What is happening to them ? Where are they now ? This is really a difficult question for any serious reader in Buddhism in the State. All must say simultaneously that some Buddhists stay in Tigiria, Maniabandha and Baramba areas in Cuttack district. Yes, they are Buddhists. But their gradual assimilation into Hinduisim, though is not visible to open eyes, it is there in all practical purposes. Because of absence of a Buddhist centre, Buddhist monk, Buddhist literature and texts with them to read and practice, the entire erosion of an environment along with no support from outside, the Buddhists in those areas are a denied lot in many respect of their social upliftment. Mainly, as it is now seen and learnt, the weaving community as a whole, are the only remaining Buddhists in the State. They are very poor. With loss of their traditional business and identity, they are now nowhere. Neither they are getting recognition from the government as minority nor they are getting benefits from outside as Buddhists.<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes back, the Mahabodhi Society made arrangements for His Excellency Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe, the then High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India to visit the *Sarakas*. Incidentally, Mr. Moonesinghe is the great grandson of Anagarika Dharmapala.

In the meantime, Nityananda Kanungo, an Oriya, was the Governor of Bihar and he informed some visiting Japanese pilgrims about this living trace of Buddhism in Orissa. Subsequently, in late 1970's, a Japanese Buddhist monk called Fuji took interest on the *Sarakas*.<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that it was this monk who was behind the construction of Peace Pagoda in Dhauli in Bhubaneswar.

He was accepted by the *Sarakas* as their preceptor. Since then, Japanese Buddhist monks are regularly in touch with the *Sarakas*. In a way, Mainabandha and Nuapatna have become places of interest for serious Buddhist pilgrims from foreign countries. The construction of Buddhist stupa at Dhauli in Bhubaneswar, where Asoka got converted to Buddhism and the archaeological excavations conducted in places such as Udayagiri, Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri, Langudi pahada etc., became an important source of inspiration for the *Bauddhatantis*. They instilled a sense of pride in them and also made others to look at them with respect.

Perhaps, the most significant boost to the renewal of the religious identity of the *Sarakas* in recent times, was provided by the visit of the Dalailama in the 1970's. His visit reminded many in the State, about this forgotten little community of ancient identity. The significance of Dalailama's visit was that, he realised the importance of providing economic assistance to sustain the unique identity of the *Sarakas*. He continues to provide assistance. Today, two cooperative societies in his name are functioning; one in Maniabandha and one in Nuapatna. He also realised the importance of the *Sarakas* living close to each other. An enclave of settlement of the *Sarakas*, centering the Buddhist temple, was created by him in Nuapatna.

Inspired by all these developments, today, the images of *Buddha* are found virtually in every *Saraka* home. The *Buddha Purnima* is celebrated with enhanced enthusiasm. All the members of the *Saraka* community meet in one place on this day. They have founded an All Orissa Buddhist Association called *Rastriya Bauddha Sangha*



at Ragadi in Banki in the District of Khurda. This Society also includes the like-minded Buddhist *Ranganis*. They meet annually. On every *Ashtami*, the eighth lunar day which comes four or five times in a month, they have their Buddhist congregation, in every *Saraka* settlement. The *Mahapatra* presides over these congregations. There, they discuss about Buddhism, read from Buddhist literature, listen to tales about Buddha's life and discuss matters related to their community. Nowadays they have started making pilgrimages to ancient Buddhist sites like Dhauli, Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri, etc.

## Chapter Nine

### Conclusion

As said at the outset, this study has been directed to understand the question of identity among the *Sarakas*, besides recording the cultural anthropology of them. Small communities normally have a special stress on their identity. The *Sarakas* are not an exception. They take a special care in endogamy, in their social organization and in their ways of life. It is very well known that, in the South Asian context, caste, religion and language play major roles in deciding the question of identity. What is the dominant criterion in the case of the *Sarakas*? It is quite evident that they do not bother much about their original Bengali identity. As suggested by the term *Bauddhatantis*, the stress is on their religious identity. But is it a primordial identity or an acquired one given by others?

Identity is a psychological state of mind in the members of a community. It is normally reflected in the myths and legends created by a community. Myths are always more powerful than historical facts. The particular shade of the identity of a community is decided by the myths.

A careful analysis of the myths and legends of the *Sarakas* tells us that the community suffers from the complex of defeat and religious persecution by deceit. Their myths talk about the Brahmins playing a trick against them; the circumstances that forced them to get dispersed and their life incognito. Even though, eventually, they found their survival by synthesising

their religion with the cult of *Jagannath* and by accepting the *Chaitanya cult* of Vaishnavism, it was superficial; perhaps, a clever concealment.

In recent times, circumstances were favourable for the re-emergence of their religious identity after being dormant for centuries. The reasons were national and international, as we have seen in the previous chapter. There are now new organizations to give them moral and economic support to re-discover their identity. Religion and culture are increasingly becoming parameters of identity in national and international thinking. This could boost the Buddhist resurgence of the *Sarakas* further, in the near future.

To what extent the *Sarakas* are aware of this phenomenon that takes place around them in order to mobilize them? Our enquiries show that they are not very clear. For many of them, there are only two religions of concern in India; Hinduism and Islam. They are not exposed to Christianity. In their view, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, etc., are all parts of Hinduism. They wish to have the Buddhist identity but at the same time, they do not like to be viewed as non-Hindus, either. This is the age-old process of accommodation in Hinduism i.e., from a pantheon of hundreds of gods and goddesses, the cult of any particular deity can be chosen. For *Sarakas*, the Buddha is the chosen one, but he is from the Hindu pantheon unless someone convinces them otherwise.

We also noticed uneasiness to some extent among the *Sarakas* about the resurgence that is taking place today. This is due to a fear that what their Hindu fraternity

would think about them. But no sense of guilt could be observed about the shift of focus from *Jagannath* to *Buddha*. This is because the compromise of equating *Jagannath* and *Buddha* had taken place long back. However, the *Sarakas* are immensely happy and proud about the new recognition they are getting especially from the international organizations.

Level of education is one obstacle for them to realize the full benefits of what is taking place and to make use of it, for their economic prosperity and political power. Very few of them have received higher education. We have already said about Sadasiva Patra. He was one of the very few to receive higher education in 1930's and to write a book on the *Sarakas*, in 1949. Over the last fifty years, the *Saraka* community couldn't produce another Sadasiva Patra. His writings have now become new religious texts for the *Sarakas*. Even today, he is the only one who writes.

One fundamental question we wish to raise at this juncture is that whether religion is really a primordial identity to the *Sarakas*? In chapter two, we have already discussed how there are contradicting views on the original religion of the *Sarakas* - whether Jainism or Buddhism. In the process of this study, it has also been discussed how the practice of their religion was changing over the centuries. What is their real identity? Could it be their profession of guild origins? Could it be that religion was playing only a side role in preserving the guild identity of their profession?

The artisan merchants are a unique phenomenon in the ancient social structure of South Asia, which was

predominantly agrarian. The agrarian communities were more powerful; had their own elaborate service castes and were based themselves firmly in their own localities. The artisan merchants were independent communities; not depending on the agrarian communities and for that matter, not even on State. Their service communities were not so elaborate. They were not even attached to a particular country or region. Therefore, the primary identity of the artisan merchants was their craft. All other criteria of identity were adoptable for them.

There was always a competition between the agrarian communities and the artisan merchants.<sup>1</sup> In South India, there was a clear distinction between them as *Valankai* and *Idankai*; means the right hand and the left hand groups. During the time of colonialism and later, the artisan merchants were the worst sufferers. While the agrarian communities manage to maintain their status, the artisan merchants deteriorated. In a political set up, where identity is power, there is no wonder that the artisan merchants have a subconscious quest to re-assert themselves to the status due to them.

There was a time when the status of guilds like that of the *Bauddhatantis* was equal to that of the landlords in Orissa. Today, while the landlords are affluent communities the *Sarakas* are classified as a backward community.

In the given atmosphere of present times, there is no way that the *Sarakas* can elevate their status by the craft they practice. Handloom weaving is not a lucrative profession nowadays. Their professional identity is so

strong that they are not prepared to give it up either. Therefore, the only possibility of gaining social prestige and to achieve upward social mobility is to harp on a valid currency i.e., their unique religious identity. —



# Notes

## Chapter One

1. *Muli tayir picainta kaantal melviral kaluvuru kalinkam kaila atu utii*

Kutalur Kilaar in *Kuruntokai*, *Mullai*, 167, a Sankam Tamil classic dateable to the dawn of the Christian Era.

2. The Periplus of the Erithrian Sea of the early centuries of the Christian Era mentions the flourishing textile industry of Kalinga.
3. Hall D.G.E., *History of South East Asia*, London, 1955.  
Coedes. G., *Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, Honolulu, 1968.

## Chapter Two

1. A widow or widower is considered as a half family.
2. Sadasiva Patra, *Buddhadeva o Bauddhadharma* (in Oriya), Published by N.C Das, 1949.
3. See Chapter . Six .
4. Mritunjaya Nayak, *Madalapanji* (in Oriya), Friends' Publishers, 1993.
5. *Madalapanji*, *ibid* .p174.
6. Sadasiva Patra, *ibid*.
7. Sterling , *Sterling's Orissa*, 1904,pp 80 - 81
8. N.N. Vasu, *Modern Buddhism and its Followers*, Calcutta, 1911.pp 22 - 23
9. Brahmachari Sheetal Prasad, *Orissara ( Shrivaka) Saraka Jatira Prachina Itihasa* (in Oriya), Published by Baijanatha Saraugi, Prachina Shrivakodharini Sabha, 173, Herisson Road, Calcutta, 1931.p 3

## Chapter Three

1. IGNOU Material, DTS, T.S - 4, *Handicrafts: Continuity and Change*, 1996,p 50

## Chapter Four

1. Subbarayalu Y, a paper read at the State Department of Archaeology, Mysore (Unpublished), 1998.
2. Sadasiva Patra, *ibid* . p144.
3. The etymological meaning of these words could be 'the head of the clan', 'the closest person', 'the one who is nearer' and 'the head of the settlement'.
4. Perhaps, means , ' the fifth' in the hierarchy, after the four leaders.
5. Fifth lunar day in the bright half of the lunar month, *Magha* (January - February)
6. See Chapter Five
7. The eighth day celebrations after marriage.
8. The full moon day that occurs on the lunar month of *Vaishakha* or solar month of *Chaitra* (April - May), Which marks the birth, enlightenment and *nibbana* (death) of Buddha.
9. Observed four times in a year on the eleventh lunar day of the bright half, the fourteenth lunar day of the dark half.
10. The full moon day of the lunar month of *Kartika* (October - November)
11. The seventh lunar day in the bright half of the lunar month, *Magha* ( January - February).
12. Shital Prasad, *ibid*. p 4

## Chapter Five

1. Heard from the *Sarakas* of Maniabandha, Nuapatna and Balibisi
2. Sterling's Orissa, *ibid* . p 80,81
3. Mritunjaya Nayak, *ibid.*, p 66,67,130,225
4. S. Patra , *ibid* . p 145
5. Heard from the *Sarakas* of Maniabandha and Balibisi.



## Chapter Six

1. Mattison Mines, *The Warrior Merchants : Textiles, Trades and Territory in South India*, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

## Chapter Seven

1. Paritosh Das, *ibid.*
2. Extracted from the handwritten manuscript of S. Patra.
3. 'On the basis of the legend mentioned in the Datha Vamsa of Dharmakirtti of Simhala, scholars say that a tooth of Buddha is kept in the body of Jagannath. The image of Jagannath which contains a mysterious substance thickly padded in silk and replaced in the new image at the time of Navakalevara is taken as the tooth relic of Buddha'. Shishir Kumar Panda, *Evolution of Jagannath Cult*, p.,543.

*'Pranipatya Jagannathan*

*Sarva jinavarrchitam*

*Sarva Buddhamayem Siddhi*

*Vyapincam Gaganopamam*

(Jnanasiddhi of Indrabhuti), *ibid.* pp 491

4. Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Gitagovinda of Jayadeva : Love song of the Dark Lord*, Motilal Benarsidas Indological Publishers, Delhi, 1984 .71

## Chapter Eight

1. S. Patra , *ibid.*
2. 'I started writing this book with the help of the Bauddha sanyasi Amara Parama Muni. Through his commitment and labour, he has brought life to the downtrodden Sarakas, Because of him, today there is a religious resurgence in the Saraka settlements of Maniabandha and Nuapatna and ..... It is not an exaggeration to call him the Maitraya Buddha of the present times'. S. Patra , *ibid.* p 4
3. Heard from the Sarakas of Nuapatna
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*

6. George D. Bond, *The Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka: Religious tradition, Reinterpretation and Representation*, Motilal Benarsidas Publishers, Delhi, 1992, pp 53-60
7. S. Patra , *ibid.* p 155.
8. Chandra Ratna Thero, *Kalinga*, Mahabodhi Society, Bhubaneswar, 2001.

## Chapter Nine

1. Mattison Mines , *ibid.*

# Bibliography

Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Gitagovinda of Jayadeva : Love song of the Dark Lord*, Motilal Benarsidas Indological Publishers, Delhi, 1984.

Chandra Ratna Thero, *Kalinga*, Mahabodhi Society, Bhubaneswar, 2001.

Coedes. G., *Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, (Translated from French), The University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1968.

George D. Bond, *The Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka: Religious tradition, Reinterpretation and Representation*, Motilal Benarsidas Publishers, Delhi, 1992.

Hall D.G.E, *History of South East Asia*, London, 1955.

Himansu P. Ray, *The Winds of Change*, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Kutalur Kilaar, *Kuruntokoi*, New Century Book House, 1983.

Mattison Mines, *The Warrior Merchants : Textiles, Trades and Territory in South India*, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Mishra P.K. and Samal J.K (ed), *Comprehensive History and Culture of Orissa*, Vol. 1 , Part II, Kaveri Books, New Delhi 1997.

Mritunjaya Nayak, *Madalapanni*, Friends' Publishers, Cuttack, 1993.

Nahata G., *What Historians say about the Sarakas* (in Oriya), Jaina Dharma Prachara Sabha, Calcutta, 1938.

Paritosh Das, *Sahajiya Cult of Bengal and Panchasakha Cult*

of Orissa, Firma KLM Private Ltd. Calcutta, 1988.

Sadasiva Patra, *Buddhadeva O Bauddhadharma (in Oriya)*, Published by N.C Das, 1949. *Sishuveda* and other Manuscripts kept by S. Patra. •

Sahu N.K., *Buddhism in Orissa*, Utkal University, 1958.

Sheetal Prasad, *Orissara (Shravaka) Saraka Jatira Prachina Itihasa* (in Oriya), Prachina Shrivakodharini Sabha, 173, Herisson Road, Calcutta, 1931.

Shishir Kumar Panda, *Evolution of Jagannath Cult, Comprehensive History and Culture of Orissa*, (ed) Mishra P.K., and Samal J.K., Kaveri Books, New Delhi 1997.

Sterling, *Sterling's Orissa*, 1904.

Vasu N.N., *Modern Buddhism and its Followers*, Calcutta, 1911.

## SEARCH ORISSA

Society For Environmental Action and Restoration of  
Cultural Heritage, Birahakrushnapur, Puri District, Orissa



Cover: From the relief panels of Borobudur, Indonesia